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SUBJECT: Toronto's Cocaine Trade Takes a Hit

¶1. In a one day sweep on Wednesday, February 27, Toronto Police arrested 23 suspects in an undercover street-level drug dealing bust that focused on Toronto's downtown Yonge Street strip. Toronto Police have charged 19 people with 61 different offenses ranging from drug dealing to conspiracy. Responding to citizens' concerns, the Toronto Drug Squad, Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS), and 52 Division's Community Response Unit and Vice units undertook a two-week long probe, dubbed "Project Take the Money and Run," which targeted drug transactions concentrating on Yonge-Dundas Square, arcades along Yonge Street, nearby College Park, and the Atrium on Bay. Police allege that undercover officers were able to purchase quantities of drugs, primarily crack cocaine, from the accused; the accused were selling drugs in locations frequented by young people; and there was a hierarchy within the dealers, who were using people with substance-abuse problems to move the drugs around town for them. Thirteen other individuals are reportedly still being sought in connection with this project.

¶2. One day before the street sweep in downtown Toronto, on Tuesday, February 26, 2008, Canadian customs officers seized C\$3.1 million worth of cocaine at the Ambassador Bridge linking Detroit and Windsor. The officers found about 25 kilograms of drugs inside a tractor trailer headed for Toronto with a shipment of foam plates, according to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). The cocaine was divided into 20 cellophane-wrapped bricks and stashed inside two duffle bags. A Kitchener, Ontario man is charged with importing a controlled substance and possession of controlled substances for the purpose of trafficking.

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